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## A TEXAS VERSION OF "THE WHITE CAPTIVE"

BY CHARLES PEABODY

Two versions of this ballad have been published, — one in the *Journal of American Folk-Lore* for 1909, pp. 256 and 257, and edited by G. F. Will; and the other in "Cowboy Songs" (New York, 1910), by John A. Lomax.

Professor Lomax's version is by far the most complete, and probably approaches nearer to the original form than either of the others. It contains fourteen verses, against ten and a half in the present form.

In addition to the presentation, there is not much to be said. In both of the longer versions there is repetition without any addition to the story, which bears the marks of being handed down from mouth to mouth.

The names of the hero and heroine in Mr. Lomax's version are Albon and Amanda, while in the present version they are Albion and Amandia. It seems likely that the original version contained "Albion" and "Amanda," which became "Amandia" by a sort of attraction. Changes in familiar names are not uncommon; as, for instance, "Elen-der" and "Alender" in the American versions of "Lord Thomas."<sup>1</sup>

As regards the ballad as a whole, its content places it somewhere in the Appalachian region, whence it went with the emigrants to the West; for all three versions hail from Texas. The use of the word "cot" for "cabin" gives the impression of a literary, if not European origin. So far, the only European cycle suggested by it is the "Maiden Freed from the Gallows" (Child, No. 95). In the Continental versions of the cycle there are the motives of the abduction and of the self-sacrificing lover, but the similarity ends there.

The ballad in question surely harks back to one of the early wars of this country, where the Indians had an Englishman for a leader. Possibly the massacre of Wyoming in the Revolutionary War may be faintly echoed here.

The music, reduced to its interval order, presents a major scale lacking its fourth, and may be a suggestion of the Celtic pentatonic scale or of the hexachordal scale lacking its leading tone, that superseded it in the fifteenth century in Scotland.

## THE WHITE CAPTIVE



<sup>1</sup> Compare G. L. Kittredge, in *Journal of American Folk-Lore*, No. LXXIX, p. 254; and the *Berea Quarterly* for April, 1905.

1. The sun has gone down o'er the hills in the west,  
And its last beams have faded o'er the mossy hill's crest;  
The beauty of nature, the charms of the fair,  
A maiden was bound with her white bosom bare.
2. At the foot of the mountain Amandia did sigh  
At the hoot of an owl or a catamount cry,  
At the howl of some wolf from its long granite cell  
Or the crush of some dead [forest] tree as it fell.
3. The camp-fire was kindled and fanned by the breeze,  
And its red embers shone o'er the evergreen trees;  
But fierce was the looks of that wild savage scene,  
The light o'er their features in entrance did gleam.
4. The watch-fire was kindled, and its red light did glare.  
This maiden was bound with her white bosom bare.  
Around her stood this mercerless throng,  
Impatient to join in the war-dancing song.
5. They brought out then the captive all friendless, forlorn,  
Her face bathed in blood and her garments all torn.  
She counted vengeance in the face of the foe,  
And sighed for the time when her suff'rings might close.
6. They waited a moment while they gazed on the fair,  
Whose dark hazel eyes were uplifted in prayer.  
And down on her bosom her dark locks did flow,  
Which hid from the gazers her bosom of snow.
7. The chief of these warriors, young Albion, drew near  
With an eye like an eagle and a step like a deer.  
"Forbear," cried young Albion, "your freedom to crave,"  
Gave a sigh for her suff'ring, and a tear o'er her grave.
8. "Forbear," cried young Albion, "your tortures forbear!  
This maiden shall live, by the heavens I swear!  
To-night if a victim shall burn at your tree,  
Young Albion, your leader, your victim shall be."
9. At the dawn of the evening, at the close of the day,  
A birch-tree canoe was seen gliding away.  
Swifter than the wild duck that skims o'er the tide  
Young Albion and Amandia together did ride.
10. At the dawn of next morning a white cot was seen  
With its blue curling smoke o'er the wild willows green,  
But great was the joy when she stepped on the shore  
To embrace her kind father and mother once more.
11. But all that he asked was kindness and food,  
From the parents of Amandia to the chief of the woods.